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Picture Story No. 28
December 15, 1946

ACCESS ROADS STEADILY OPEN UP MORE NATIONAL FOREST TIMBER:

Throughout the country, hundreds of miles of new forest roads are being pushed from established highway systems into remote mountain timber areas never before accessible to loggers. This extension of roads into the rugged back country forests is part of the nation's effort to boost lumber supplies for the Veterans' Emergency Housing Program.

Under a Forest Service plan calling for more than 2300 miles of new or improved roads in National Forests by the end of June 1947, work is being done in 31 States. To date, about 800 miles have been completed, while projects including more than 1500 are under way. Completed, the new roads are expected to increase the National Forest and nearby timber output by 240,000,000 board feet this year and by more than a billion in 1947.

Construction of these access roads is a rough, tough job. Often the right of way must snake its course up steep, rocky canyons, hug tortuous mountain streams, or curve and twist along mountainsides. Much of the way must be blasted through primeval rock, or be cut and firmed across shale banks ripe for a landslide. Towering trees frequently must be felled and their huge stumps dynamited from the road bed. Fills must be made across gullies. Trestles, bridges, and culverts must be built.

On the job is an army of around 2,000 men, many of them ex-GIs, with heavy equipment -- bulldozers, trucks, tractors, graders, scrapers, and rock-crushing plants. The roads are planned, surveyed, and checked by Forest Service and Public Roads Administration engineers. About 60 percent of the actual road-building is being done by private contractors, with the remainder by the Forest Service itself. So tough is the going that over-all equipment depreciation -- both Forest Service and private contractor -- is expected to reach \$1,500,000 for this year alone. In addition, a \$1,500,000 equipment repair bill is anticipated. Available for the program is \$11,800,000 allotted to the service by the National Housing Agency and another \$5,200,000 of regular Forest Service funds.

The National Forest stands of high mountain or other remote timber, together with other public timber, now constitute the nation's last reserve. Those being tapped by the new roads will be cut on a sustained yield basis, thus assuring their continuous production of timber for the future as well as lumber for GI homes now. The access roads will have permanent value because from here out they will make possible the orderly management and protection of the stands they tap for the continuous growing and harvesting of timber crops.

Mileage of access roads being built under present plans in the various National Forest States follows:

Alabama, 5.35; Arkansas, 54.6; Arizona, 43; California, 225.7; Colorado, 163.21; Florida, 145.7; Georgia, 27.7; Idaho, 239.7; Illinois, 1.0; Kentucky, 12.1; Louisiana, 33.3; Michigan, 30.1; Minnesota, 126.7; Mississippi, 120.1; Montana, 274.6; New Hampshire, 9.5; New Mexico, 119; North Carolina, 34.5; Oregon, 184.03; Pennsylvania, 9; South Carolina, 43; South Dakota, 10; Tennessee, 38.5; Texas, 15.2; Utah, 80.3; Vermont, 9.2; Virginia, 39.5; Washington, 117.3; West Virginia, 22.6; Wisconsin, 16; and Wyoming, 94.5. Total mileage, all States, 2344.99.

The story of access road building is graphically portrayed in the accompanying pictures.

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